12: Vakar U-4 (no date) 1949 RC1 Byelorussia RC1

103 The origins of the term "White Russia" have also been sought in the religious background of the Slavic peoples. Supporters of this theory remind us that Constantine Porphyrogenitus used the term "white" in order to distinguish the baptized Croats and Serbs from those who remained pagan (Svencicki). But this distinction could not hold for the Belorussians, since all the Slavic tribes from Kiev to Novgorod were Christians in the fourteenth century when the name White Russia first appeared in documents.[7]

Discouraged by the historical evidence, one may seek refuge in the darkness of prehistoric times. According to certain writers, the Russian word for "white" (*belyj*) was derived from the name of an obscure Slavic deity *BELbog*, *BEL-gorjuč-kamen'* (otherwise: *alatyr'*, [794] *aladyr'*, "magic stone").[8] Some traces of the ancient cult of Belbog are indeed found among the Western Slavs. Although little is known about the cult, one can deduce that Belbog was the opposite of Černobog, god of evil. Hence the association of the adjective *belyj* with anything good, pure, light and bright. The Slavic proper name Beloslav, though rare, supposedly expressed the same idea (Miklosich). Some writers have seen a relation between Belbog and Belun, a mythical character in Ukrainian and Belorussian folklore, personifying good fortune (Afanas'ev, Dahl).[9] It is only a step further to the proposition that the country was called "white" because its people worshipped a "white god."

The theory found no supporters at the time it was formulated (1826), but it was revived a century later by a group of Belorussian political exiles in Lithuania (1923). Impressed by the apparent

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teenth Century, XVII (1885), 321–30.) The name *červonaja* may thus have appeared as a Polish or Ukrainian translation from Latin. Indeed, the color symbolism may have nothing to do with it. In 1918–20, the peasant guerillas fighting both the Reds and the Whites and living in the woods, were often called *Zelënaja Rus'*. Cf. "*kondovaja, izbjanaja* Rus' " (A. Blok), "*sermjažnaja* Rus' " (N. Nekrasov), "*brodjačaja* Rus'," "*svjataja* Rus'," etc.

7 At the time of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, "enigmatic northern Croatia . . . reappeared, after a long eclipse, as a young and vigorous pagan State." From the context of Chapter XXXI it appears that Constantine used the term "white" to stress the political independence of those Croats who "have remained without baptism to our day." Cf. Henri Grégoire, "L'origine et le nom des Croates et des Serbes," *Byzantion*, XVII (1944–45), p. 96.

8 M. Makarov, "Neskol'ko slov osobennykh, upotrebljaemykh v raznykh oblastjakh Rossii," *Vestnik Evropy* XXI–XXII (1826), 143–48.

9 Association of the color white with good fortune was also not unknown in the West. Among the different meanings of "white," Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary* lists: (now rare) "fortunate," "auspicious." Cf. F. Portal, *Des couleurs symboliques dans l'antiquité, le moyen-âge et les temps modernes* (Paris, 1837); K. E. Goetz, "Weiss und Schwarz bei den Römern," *Festschrift zum 25 jährigen Stiftungsfest des hist.-philol. Ver., Universität München* (Munich, 1905), pp. 63–73; more relevent though contradictory data in F. B. Gummere, "On the Symbolic Use of the Colors Black and White in Germanic Tradition," *Haverford College Studies*, I (1889), 112–62.